

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0093

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FOR STATE AND AID

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AF, US, EAID

SUBJECT: US ASSISTANCE IN THE HELMAND VALLEY

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT DAOUD'S BROTHER NAIM TOLD ME JANUARY 5 THAT THE GOA ATTACHES TOP PRIORITY, AS FAR AS US ASSISTANCE PROJECTS ARE CONCERNED, TO THE HELMAND VALLEY. HE SAID THAT THE AFGHANS DO NOT THEMSELVES HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO PLAN FOR THE VALLEY'S DEVELOPMENT AND THEREFORE LOOK TO THE US TO COME UP WITH A PLAN AS WELL AS TO FINANCE SPECIFIC PROJECTS. IN ADDITION TO INDICATING THE KINDS OF PROJECTS WE CAN UNDERTAKE IN THE HELMAND, I PRESSED FOR AN INDICATION AS TO WHAT OFFICIAL OR OFFICIALS WE CAN LAUNCH A DIALOGUE WITH ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE AND DURING AID/AA/NESA NOOTER'S JANUARY 23-28 VISIT. I GOT NO CLEAR ANSWER.

2. I CALLED ON NAIM JANUARY 5 AT MY REQUEST. I TOLD HIM I WANTED TO DISCUSS OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF HIS REQUEST TO SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR FURTHER US ASSISTANCE IN THE HELMAND VALLEY AND OF AID/AA/NESA NOOTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO KABUL. I DESCRIBED THE NEW EMPHASIS IN OUR AID PROGRAM ON ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR PRIMARILY IN HEALTH, EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, NOTING THAT WE ARE TOGETHER

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MAKING GOOD PROGRESS ON DEVELOPING NEW PROJECTS IN THESE AREAS.

AS FAR AS THE HELMAND IS CONCERNED, I SAID THESE NEW PROJECTS WOULD BE APPLICABLE THERE AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN. IN ADDITION, WE ARE ASSISTING WITH ELECTRIFICATION PROJECTS IN THE VALLEY. AS FAR AS ANY BROADER ASSISTANCE IN THE VALLEY IS CONCERNED, I SAID WE HAD RESERVATIONS ON TWO GROUNDS. ONE IS THAT WE BELIEVE THERE ARE TRAINED AFGHANS TO RUN THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE VALLEY. SECONDLY, WE HAD WORKED WITH THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP IN THE VALLEY LAST YEAR ON A JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL SITUATION, BUT THAT AS THE AFGHAN SIDE HAD NOT SEEMED INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE MATTER, WE HAD WITHDRAWN OUR PERSONNEL FROM THE EXERCISE.

3. IN RESPONSE NAIM EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT THE GOA REGARDS THE HELMAND AS THE TOP PRIORITY AREA FOR AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VALLEY NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED. THAT MEANS NOT JUST THE KINDS OF PROJECTS I HAD REFERRED TO, BUT ALSO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. ABOVE ALL, WHAT IS NEEDED IS A MASTER PLAN, AND NAIM STRESSED THAT THE AFGHANS DO NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO MAKE SUCH A PLAN. HE SAID THE US HOPEFULLY WOULD ASSIST IN MAKING SUCH A PLAN WHICH WOULD IN TURN SPECIFY PROJECTS FOR WHICH US ASSISTANCE WOULD ALSO BE FORTHCOMING.

4. I TOLD NAIM THAT WE NEEDED TO HAVE A DIALOGUE IN GREATER DEPTH ON AFGHAN DESIRES AND US CAPABILITIES IN THE HELMAND BOTH BEFORE AND DURING NOOTER'S VISIT. WITH WHOM DID HE THINK SUCH A DIALOGUE WOULD BE PURSUED? SHOULD I ASK OUR AID DIRECTOR TO GO TO THE VALLEY FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NEW GOVERNOR?

5. NAIM REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THESE QUESTIONS WERE MORE FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN KABUL. AFTER SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION, HE SEEMED TO THINK THAT THE MINISTER OF PLANNING WOULD BE THE LOGICAL OFFICIAL TO CONDUCT THESE DISCUSSIONS, ADDING THAT OF COURSE OTHER MINISTRIES WOULD ALSO BE INVOLVED. OUR DISCUSSION CONCLUDED ON THIS NOTE.

6. COMMENT: NAIM AND HIS BROTHER HAVE A FIXATION ABOUT AMERICAN ASSISTANCE IN THE HELMAND DATING BACK TO THEIR
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1953-63 PERIOD IN POWER. IN POLITICAL TERMS, THEY REGARD OUR ASSISTANCE THERE AS A BELLWETHER OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD AFGHANISTAN. OUR PROBLEM REMAINS HOW TO RECONCILE THEIR POLITICAL INTEREST WITH OUR AID CAPABILITIES AND LEGISLATION. IN ADDITION, THERE IS THE PROBLEM MENTIONED TO NAIM AS TO WHO ON THE AFGHAN SIDE CAN CARRY ON A DIALOGUE WITH US ON THE HELMAND. NEVERTHELESS WE WILL ATTEMPT A DIALOGUE WITH AFGHAN OFFICIALS IN THE REMAINING THREE WEEKS BEFORE NOOTER'S ARRIVAL

AND WE MAY HAVE SOME FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE DURING THAT PERIOD.

7. WE HAVE ALSO GIVEN THOUGHT TO PROS AND CONS OF NOOTER'S VISITING THE VALLEY. I THINK IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE FOR HIM NOT REPEAT NOT TO DO SO UNLESS THE GOA URGES OR INVITES HIM TO GO THERE, WHICH IT HAS NOT YET DONE. OTHERWISE IT WOULD APPEAR WE WERE TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO RESUME OUR ACTIVITIES THERE.
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